

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANAMA 00508 051839Z

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 051315Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4315
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA

S E C R E T MANAMA 508

EXDIS

DEPT. FOR ASST. SECY ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, XF, US, BA
SUBJECT: MEMCON OF RIYADH CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING

REF: JIDDA 1530

1. REFTEL MEMCON OF RIYADH CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING WITH
SECRETARY IS IN MY MEMORY SIGNIFICANTLY DEFICIENT IN RECORDING
DISCUSSION OF MIDEASTFOR. IF YOUR RECOLLECTION AGREES WITH
MINE SUGGEST DRAFT BE ADJUSTED ACCORDINGLY. RECORD SHOULD
BE CLEAR AND ACCURATE FOR, AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE BASED SUBSE-
QUENT DISCUSSIONS WITH GOB ON RIYADH CONVERSATIONS.

2. IN MY RECOLLECTION, AND ON BASIS NOTES MADE
AFTER MEETING, SEQUENCE AND CONTENT OF CONVERSATION WAS AS
FOLLOWS:

-- I GAVE BRIEF OUTLINE OF RECENT HISTORY OF MIDEASTFOR
PROBLEM, AND IN BRINGING IT UP TO DATE SAID THAT (A) INFORMAL
TALKS APPROVED IN DEPT. IN JANUARY HAD NOW PROGRESSED
TO POINT WHERE (B) I FELT THAT WE HAD CHANCE OF SUCCESS AND
(C) THAT THOUGH SOME MEMBERS OF GOB WANTED SUBSTANTIAL ARMS
IN EXCHANGE, INCLUDING F-5 AIRCRAFT, I FELT WE COULD GET

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SATISFACTORY OUTCOME FOR FAR LESS. I BELIEVE I MENTIONED
HELICOPTER AND SMALL NAVAL CRAFT AND NOTED THAT GOB BY NO
MEANS IN AGREEMENT THAT BAHRAIN NEEDED SOPHISTICATED ARMS.

-- I POINTED OUT FONMIN'S SUSPICION THAT NEW US ADMIN-
ISTRATION MIGHT NOT BE INTERESTED IN KEEPING NAVAL PRESENCE
IN GULF AND INDIAN OCEAN AREAS.

-- UNDER SECRETARY HABIB INTERJECTED THAT THOUGH USG

MUST REVIEW ITS INTEREST IN THIS PRESENCE, WE DID NEED TO KNOW WHAT ALTERNATIVES TO PRESENT MIDEASTFOR ARRANGEMENTS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. HE DESCRIBED BRIEFLY FOR SECRETARY CABLE WE HAD SENT TO OTHER AREA POSTS SEEKING THEIR VIEWS ON INCREASED USN USE OF AREA PORTS. I RECALL THAT HE ADMONISHED THOSE PRESENT WHO MIGHT NOT HAVE REPLIED TO DO SO SOON.

-- I AGAIN PICKED UP THREAD OF MY PRESENTATION, DESCRIBING BASIS FOR AND CONTENT OF INFORMAL TALKS I WAS HAVING HERE.

-- YOU INTERJECTED THAT WHAT WAS NEEDED RE MIDEASTFOR WAS CONFIRMATION BY SECRETARY THAT COURSE I WAS ON HAD HIS APPROVAL. YOUR ALSO BRIEFLY NOTED IMPLICATION OF MIDEASTFOR ISSUE FOR BROADER QUESTION OF OUR INDIAN OCEAN PRESENCE.

-- SECRETARY SAID HE APPROVED CONTINUATION OF TALKS HERE ALONG LINES WHICH I HAD DESCRIBED.

3. NIT-PICKING IS NOT MY PURPOSE IN OFFERING CORRECTIONS TO DRAFT MEMCON PREPARED BY EMBASSY JIDDA. RATHER, RIYADH CONVERSATIONS PROVIDE BASIS AND, INDEED, AUTHORITY FOR MY ON-GOING TALKS HERE AND THE RECORD THEREOF OUGHT TO BE AS PRECISE AS POSSIBLE.

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